

understood the rules of the game but played it and won. And this is the model of elite female behaviour inherited by her renowned daughter, the first duchess, with whom the book ends.

Overall the book shows that we can only reach a more complete understanding of Irish history ‘through a rounded and thorough analysis of all parties involved’ (p. 237). In attending to the women of the Ormond dynasty, Duffy has drawn upon a wide range of primary sources. His focus is on the women’s actions but their voices emerge through sources like wills, recorded speech and letters. Letters by Margaret Butler, Joan Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Preston are discussed in the book, and this is an aspect that could be developed further. It is possible that other women’s letters will be found among the Ormond Papers in the National Library of Ireland — the published calendars under-represent the number of letters by women and there is currently no alternative but to sift through the manuscripts one volume at a time.

Duffy approaches the women’s writings as an historian but engagement with literary scholars and art historians who have also made significant contributions to our understanding of women in medieval and early modern Ireland would further support the central argument about women’s agency. Still, he utilises the textual and material culture of the Ormond women very well and vividly recreates the worlds in which they operated. Some illustrations to complement the text (portraits, buildings, objects, writings) would have been welcome, and a family tree would have helped to keep track of the generations of Ormond women and their relationships with one another, but overall this is an important and highly readable book that will be much cited by scholars of medieval and early modern Ireland.

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CIVILISED BY BEASTS: ANIMALS AND URBAN CHANGE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY DUBLIN. By Juliana Adelman. Pp 234. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2020. £80.

The last decade has seen a flurry of publications that challenge the narrative of Irish urban history. For too long the focus was on urban politics and sectarian conflict, with the multi-faceted nature of Irish towns and cities being ignored. Recently several studies have been published that enrich our knowledge of the Irish urban experience, and Dr Adelman’s *Civilised by beasts* is a welcome and original contribution to the field. This book explores human-animal relationships in Dublin from 1830 to 1900. In doing so, she explains that ‘[t]he city past and present has often appeared as a human-only space. Nineteenth-century city views, for example, often excluded urban animals’ (pp 1–2). Dr Adelman provides a fascinating prism through which to explore urban change in nineteenth-century Dublin. Over five chapters, she skilfully explores how animals served the city – from exotic creatures being displayed in the zoo and livestock being slaughtered and butchered for human consumption, to horses transporting residents from the city centre to the expanding suburbs and the growth of keeping pets — and how their relationship with humans changed as the latter sought to tackle the social and environmental challenges that urban dwellers experienced from urban living.

Class conflict is central to this narrative, with the growing power and influence of the middle classes allowing them to have ‘more control over animals and how they were used’ (p. 3). Such command was executed by various means: through the levers of power in Dublin Corporation and the introduction of bye-laws, in addition to increasing national legislation; and the metropolis’s wider associational culture including the Dublin Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the revival of the Dublin Sanitary Association in 1872.

A feature of this book that is particularly interesting is the role of the municipal expert — and the growing surveillance state, more generally — in regulating animals in Dublin. The increased awareness and understanding of public health concerns from the mid-nineteenth century led to authorities paying greater attention to nuisances through a combination of

licensing, registration and inspection. This growth of regulation and policing brought public health officers to the forefront of urban governance in Dublin. For example, the celebrated and respected Charles Cameron — who started out as a city analyst for the corporation, where his duties included detecting diseased meat and adulterated milk, before his appointment as chief medical officer — was a key figure in the public department. In addition, Adelman rightly draws attention to the role of Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) in regulating animals. In 1879, the corporation employed twenty-one policemen as sanitary inspectors, with duties including counting pigs across the city and checking that owners had dog licences (pp 152, 155). It would have been interesting to have known more about the performance of other similar sized corporations in how they structured their public health departments to regulate animals.

A mixed picture of success emerges, however, in policing and enforcing public health and sanitary standards that were targeted at animals. We are introduced, for example, to fascinating characters such as Denis Doyle, a dubious butcher, who continued to slaughter animals in his private premises during the 1860s despite not possessing a slaughterhouse licence. Even after being taken to court he refused to desist from slaughtering animals. Adelman argues that the corporation was ‘more interested in implementing a system of surveillance than creating change’ (p. 96). Whilst the idea of a public abattoir was raised in 1851, the corporation did not seriously consider building one before 1866. Political expediency was undoubtedly a factor with the majority liberal corporation elected by lower-middle-class businessmen, which included butchers. As such, there emerged ‘a very unequal geography of slaughter with some Dubliners constantly exposed to the moral and physical hazards’ (p. 96). The competing demands of managing public health whilst balancing civic pride and economic prosperity are evident throughout this study, including in the decision-making around erecting a Dublin cattle market.

More broadly, the cultural representation of human-animal relationships is another notable aspect of this study. From the Famine period onwards, urban pigs were perceived as both a sanitary and moral danger, with the corporation and D.M.P. seeking to reduce urban pig-keeping in Dublin. Despite the economic benefits for poorer citizens, Dr Adelman highlights how pig-keeping could also be viewed as a reflection on a ‘person’s moral and intellectual character’ (p. 78) as this animal was associated with ‘filth, laziness and immorality’ (p. 82). Moreover, it raises questions around Irish modernisation and perceptions of Irish backwardness. In sharp contrast, the growth of pedigree Irish dog breeding in the second half of the century was much more respectable. In 1864, Dublin hosted its first dog show, and over time it conformed with standards set by the English Kennel Club. The introduction of a dog tax in 1865 highlights how this animal became a ‘middle-class commodity’ (p. 136).

In summary, *Civilised by beasts* is a fascinating and engaging study that both reimagines nineteenth-century Dublin and encourages the reader to think differently about the processes and outcomes of urban improvement. Juliana Adelman has mined a wealth of source material; in particular, the use of popular song and visual ephemera throughout the book helps convey the disagreeable sights and smells of the Irish metropolis in this period. In short, this book succeeds in providing an illuminating insight into nineteenth-century Dublin. It should be read widely, and the publisher’s decision to print a paperback is welcome news.

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THE POLITICS OF DUBLIN CORPORATION, 1840–1900: FROM REFORM TO EXPANSION. By James H. Murphy. Pp 224. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2020. €45.

James H. Murphy promptly acknowledges a limited but important ‘first study of the politics of Dublin Corporation in terms of the political actors engaging in the issues of their day’ (p. 12). This he has admirably achieved in a relatively short text of one hundred and eighty pages that captures the essence and nature of the politics of the corporation in the Victorian